

attacks on different islands to secure better port anchorages, to gain improved farm lands, and to defend other holdings.

The Napoleonic Wars of the late 1700s and early 1800s further weakened colonial power in the Americas. A slave rebellion begun in 1791 in Haiti eventually succeeded, and Haiti gained independence from France. Although the French received help from Spanish and British forces, none of whom were eager to see slave revolts hurt lucrative holdings in the Caribbean, the slave army, commanded mostly by Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743–1803), achieved its final victory at Vertières, and Napoléon Bonaparte (1769–1821) conceded Haitian independence in 1803. Without Haiti as a gateway, Napoléon forced the retransfer of Louisiana from Spain and then sold the vast territory between the Mississippi River and the Continental Divide, including the port of New Orleans, to the United States for \$15 million.

As the Napoleonic Wars ended, and as the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815) sought to impose stability and restore the old order, the New World continued to evolve. Napoléon had sold French Louisiana and thus he created a potential juggernaut, which soon would push for West Coast ports and access to the Pacific Ocean. The Spanish Empire was straining at the seams, as Simón Bolívar (1783–1830) and José de San Martín (1778–1850) led independence movements that would liberate Central and South America. The nineteenth century would bring even greater changes to the New World. The “Indian wars” continued in the Americas until the late nineteenth century, not only in the United States, but in Mexico, Central America, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile.

SEE ALSO *Buccaneers; Treaty of Tordesillas.*

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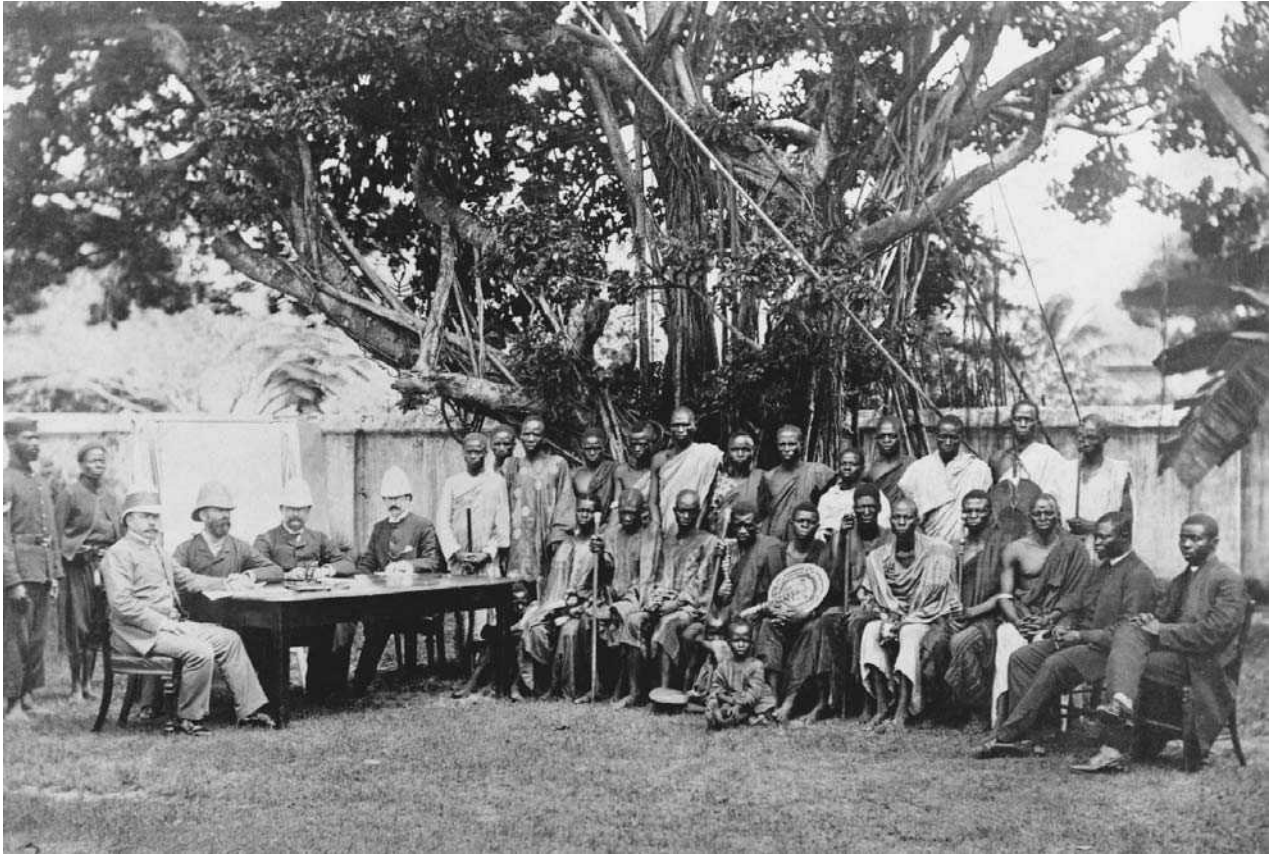
Charles M. Dobbs

WARRANT CHIEFS, AFRICA

The British administrative system of indirect rule incorporated the indigenous elite in the administration of some African colonies. Although the powers of African collaborators have been exaggerated, British rule would have faced severe difficulties of finance and personnel if Africans were not employed to administer local regions. British officials were paid higher salaries and were available in very limited numbers.

In areas with centralized political institutions, such as the Buganda Kingdom in present-day Uganda and the Islamic emirates of northern Nigeria, the British employed a policy of indirect rule in which existing indigenous chiefs helped to govern Britain's African possessions. The indirect rule system was elevated to the level of an administrative ideology by Frederick Lugard (1858–1945), first colonial governor of Nigeria, and the system was applied vigorously to Nigeria and other colonial territories in Africa.

The warrant chief system emanated as a matter of necessity from the lack of preexisting chieftaincy traditions in some parts of Africa. There were parts of British colonial territories, such as the Igbo region of eastern Nigeria, which had no tradition of chieftaincy intuitions. The British appointed willing participants or collaborators and gave them “warrants” to act as local representatives of the British administration among their people. The French, Belgians, and Portuguese, practicing



British Colonial Administrators Meet with Nigerian Representatives. During the colonial period in Africa, the British appointed African collaborators and gave them “warrants” to act as local representatives of the British among their people. This meeting between British administrators and African representatives took place in Lagos, Nigeria, in the early twentieth century. © HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

so-called direct administration, also appointed provincial chiefs to assist in local administration. The appointment of warrant and provincial chiefs was an invention of traditions that have continued in different forms today.

The British failed to realize, however, that some parts of Africa were unfamiliar with the idea of “chiefs” or “kings.” Among the Igbo, for example, decisions were made by protracted debate and general consensus. The new powers given to the warrant chiefs and enhanced by the native court system led to an exercise of power and authority unprecedented in precolonial times. Warrant chiefs also used their power to accumulate wealth at the expense of their subjects. Through this process, colonial officials tended to create or recreate a patriarchal society because only men were appointed as warrant chiefs.

The appointment of warrant chiefs created significant problems and engendered large-scale resentment among African people. The warrant chiefs were hated because they were corrupt and arrogant. One of the most important acts of resistance to the warrant chief system

occurred among the Igbo of eastern Nigeria during the famous 1929 women’s revolt in which thousands of peasant women protested against the introduction of taxes, the warrant chief system, and the low prices of agricultural produce emanating from the global depression of the late 1920s. The indirect rule and warrant chief systems were particularly foreign to existing political structures.

The women’s protests, which started in Oloko Bende Division in eastern Nigeria, quickly spread throughout the Owerri and Calabar provinces, culminating in massive revolts called *Ogu Umunwanyi* or the “Women’s War” among the Igbo. By December 1929, when troops restored order in the region, the women had destroyed ten native courts and damaged a number of others, and about fifty-five women were killed by the colonial troops. In addition, the houses of warrant chiefs and native court personnel were attacked, European factories at Imo River, Aba, Mbawsi, and Amata were looted, and prisons were attacked and prisoners released.

The women called for the revocation of the warrant chief system, the removal of warrant chiefs whom they accused of high-handedness, bribery, and corruption, and their replacement with indigenous clan heads appointed by the people rather than by the British.

Throughout late December 1929 and early January 1930, the commission of inquiry set up to investigate the remote and immediate causes of the women's movement sat in over thirty locations throughout the eastern region to collect evidence and recommend punishment for the actors or their communities. Nevertheless, the 1929 Women's War brought about fundamental reforms in British colonial administration. The British finally abolished the warrant chief system and reassessed the nature of colonial rule among the natives of Nigeria. Several colonial administrators condemned the prevailing administrative system and agreed to the demand for urgent reforms based on the indigenous system. Court tribunals that incorporated the indigenous system of government that had prevailed before colonial rule were introduced to replace the old warrant chief system.

SEE ALSO *Britain's African Colonies; Igbo Women's War; Indirect Rule, Africa.*

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Chima J. Korie

WESTERN THOUGHT, MIDDLE EAST

The interest taken by the Islamic world in Western thought prior to the colonial period was selective and spasmodic. The expansion of Islam in the centuries following the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 C.E. quickly brought Muslims into contact with populations rooted in other cultural traditions, such as those of ancient Greece and Persia, and during the Abbasid period (749–1258 C.E.), an institution known as the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikma) was established in Baghdad to facilitate the translation of Greek and other texts.

A large number of important works were translated into Arabic during this period, often through the intermediate language of Syriac, including works by Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.), Plato (ca. 427–347 B.C.E.), and Ptolemy (second century C.E.), but the selection of works was primarily practical and utilitarian. Greek learning was translated when it was felt that it could supply a

need or serve the interests of those in positions of authority, either religious or political. Many works of philosophy, mathematics, medicine, and other sciences were accordingly translated into Arabic, but little or no attention was paid to works of Greek literature, from which the Muslims felt they had nothing to learn.

At the other end of the Islamic world, Islamic Spain provided a forum for the cross-fertilization of cultures (Muslim, Jewish, and Christian) from the eighth century C.E. to the fall of Granada in 1492—a phenomenon that has been much studied, though its precise ramifications remain in some cases obscure. Despite its obvious importance for the history of contacts between Islam and the West, however, Islamic Spain was more significant as a channel for the transmission of Greek and Islamic ideas to Christian Europe than for any transmission in the opposite direction. Contact between the two cultures of a different kind was provided by the Crusades, a series of Western military expeditions to the Holy Land between 1095 and 1270, but these are of little or no significance in the present context.

THE OTTOMANS

From the fifteenth to the early twentieth century, much of the Middle East and North Africa remained under the control of the Ottoman Empire, centered on Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey). Early Ottoman rulers seemed eager to learn from European ideas, both contemporary and classical. Sultan Mehmed II (1432–1481), for example, who had conquered Constantinople in 1453, had the works of Ptolemy and Plutarch (ca. 46–120 C.E.) translated into Turkish, and gathered Italian and Greek scholars around him at his court.

These initiatives, however, lost their impetus as the Ottoman Empire generally lost its vitality, so that, despite contacts on various levels, intellectual exchanges between Europe and the Ottoman Middle East were not of major significance during the succeeding period. It was not until the latter part of the eighteenth century that Sultan Selim III (r. 1789–1807) made serious attempts to reform the empire, by then threatened with economic and administrative chaos, on the basis of European ideas, opening embassies in major European capitals in order to promote links, and opening the way for the formation of a new educated class of reform-minded intellectuals later in the nineteenth century.

Meanwhile, within the Ottoman Empire, particular ethnic and religious groups had, for different reasons, been maintaining regular intellectual contacts of their own with their counterparts in the West. The Christian Maronite community, centered on Lebanon, had had a college in Rome since 1584, and members of that community were later to play a prominent role in the *nahda*